

# How to get your pet to lose weight

Generally, losing weight can be managed by **altering energy input** and **increasing exercise**.

But sometimes it isn't always this simple. Animals can have underlying conditions which may prevent them from losing weight easily which is why it is important to first seek advice from a veterinarian before undertaking a weight loss plan.

Two main factors which can help achieve a healthy body weight are:

## Exercise:

Exercise is a great way to maintain a good body condition score and keep that extra weight off your pet.

If your dog isn't getting daily exercise, then try to take them out at least once daily. Here are a few tips to help get you started:



1. Remember the goal is weight loss so try to make these walks as active as possible and not a 'stroll'.
2. Get your pet's heart rate up! This is difficult if they get to stop and sniff every few seconds, so aim for a brisk 30 minute walk daily.
3. Bear in mind if your pet isn't used to a lot of activity it may take a while for them to become fitter so always work with the capacity your animal can handle
4. Avoid exercising in the heat of the day. This is especially important with our short-nosed dogs such as the French Bulldog and Pug (brachycephalics).
5. Swimming is great too! If your animal is a bit older or finding it difficult to walk for 30 minutes, swimming can be a great way to introduce exercise to their day but also take weight off possibly sore joints.
6. Try to involve your pet in your daily activity too – if you go for a run, take your pet with you.



Exercise can also be achieved at home too:

1. Playing games a few times during the day such as tug of war or ball chasing can be a great way to get your pet active.
2. This can also be applied to indoor cats who may not be using enough energy during the day. Playing regular games with them with such as toy chasing or using laser pointers is a great way to get them active.

# How to get your pet to lose weight

## Diet:

One of the main reasons animals can be over weight is because they are fed the incorrect amount of food. Amount of food depends on a few things such as the size, breed and lifestyle of your animal.

When visiting your veterinarian, they can work out the maintenance energy requirement for your animal based on an ideal body weight. Using this and the calories of the food fed at home, a plan can be made as to how much to feed your pet for a weight loss goal.



Alternatively, there are many prescription diets which when used with an exercise plan can be a great way to achieve weight loss and reduce the variation in day to day calories your pet may be getting with alternative foods. Many prescription diets work by having reduced calories per feed but aren't reduced in proteins, minerals and vitamins so your pet doesn't miss out on important nutrients and still gets that 'full feeling'.



Delicate Care® weight management contains a range of fibres which helps your animal feel full but is well balanced and easily digestible to ensure nutrition is not compromised.

Feeding snacks or treats is an easy way in which animals can gain too much energy during the day for their requirements. Many pet owners feel feeding treats during the day increases the human- animal bond, but it can also lead to obesity and reduced quality of life! When feeding your pet treats, they should always be accounted for in your pets daily recommended intake of food.



There are some healthy treats which can keep your pet engaged, make them work for food or even slow down the time it takes them to eat so they feel full more quickly. Some healthy treat options include:

- Vegetables such as carrot, celery, broccoli, green beans
- Using frozen vegetables as this can increase the time it takes to eat them
- Chopped vegetables frozen in ice blocks from water or salt reduced stock

Try to avoid meat or carbohydrate treats as these are higher in calories and can prevent weight loss.

Weight loss should always be a gradual process, so once you have a plan with your veterinary team then weekly to fortnightly weigh-ins are an important part of assessing the effectiveness of the plan. Once your pet has achieved its goal weight then it is important that a maintenance plan is followed to ensure the healthy diet and exercise habits are maintained!